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ONNETS

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GEORGE T. S. FARQUHAR

To the Rev. J. Dunn M. A.
with the Author's kind regards.

Perth. Nov. 26. 1891

SONNETS.

BY

REV. GEORGE T. S. FARQUHAR, M.A.,

CANON AND PRECENTOR OF S. NINIAN'S CATHEDRAL, PERTH.

WITH INTRODUCTORY VERSES

BY

RIGHT REV. CHAS. WORDSWORTH, D.D., D.C.L.,

BISHOP OF S. ANDREWS, ETC.

“ With stammering lips and insufficient sound
I strive and struggle to deliver right
The music of my nature.”

—*Mrs. Browning.*

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Preface.

IN presenting these verses to a wider public than the few who have already seen them in manuscript, I will not attempt to explain or defend them. I hope that they will explain and defend themselves.

It may, however, save some readers trouble if I state that, though the Sonnets are naturally arranged in groups and numbered, every one in the volume was composed independently of all the others, and forms a complete whole by itself. This, indeed, ought always to be the case with Sonnets.

It may also be as well, lest this little book should fall into the hands of even one person who does not know what a Sonnet is, to explain the laws to be observed in this kind of poetry. Its most essential rules are as follows:—(1.) The Sonnet must consist of fourteen lines. (2.) These must fall into two groups of four lines each, followed by two of three each. (3.) In the first eight lines only two rhyme sounds are allowed, and are only allowed in the following order, *i.e.*, lines 1, 4, 5, 8 must rhyme together, and lines 2, 3, 6, 7 must also rhyme together. (4.) In the last six lines, three rhyme sounds are allowed, and may be arranged in any order, it being preferable that a rhyming couplet should not come last. This is the normal form of the Sonnet. But there is also another, called

the Shakespearian, on the model of which several of the following have been composed.¹ This consists, not like the former, of eight lines followed by six, but of three sets of four lines followed by a rhyming couplet. In this species the rules for rhyming are not so strict. Unless these rudimentary rules are understood, it is not very easy to enter into the spirit of a Sonnet.

I can scarcely hope to have here shewn myself complete master of so elaborate and delicate a form of poetical composition, but yet, as Shakespeare says,

“Lean Penury within that Pen doth dwell
That to his subject lends not some small glory.”²

A few of the following have already appeared in the *Scottish Guardian* and one or two in the *Perthshire Advertiser* and *Perthshire Constitutional*, but the great majority are here printed for the first time.

Finally, I must express my sincere thanks to the Bishop of S. Andrews for speaking an encouraging word with regard to the first group of these Sonnets.

GEORGE T. S. FARQUHAR.

20 BALHOUSIE STREET,
PERTH, *April 10, 1890.*

¹ Namely those on pages 35, 42, 52, 66.

² Sonnet lxxxiv.

PREFATORY SONNET.



Prefatory Sonnet.

THE SONNET'S CHARM.

LET those whose hearts with the world's noise are filled,
Unloose the current of their fluent mind ;
Let them their fancies of each passing kind
Pour out in floods of talk that ne'er are stilled.
To me it rather seems that God, who willed
That man should be to the dread future blind,
Yet, hastening conscious thither, wished to find
Our spirits in expectant quiet skilled.
This, then, is wisdom, that we pass through life
Not running riot 'mid earth's restless strife,
But gravely pondering what the years have taught.
Hence, too, the Sonnet's charm, for 'tis the choice
Of those who love not ceaseless flow of voice,
But brief and pregnant words full charged with thought.



Dedicated

TO

VERY REV. V. L. RORISON, M.A.,

PROVOST OF THE CATHEDRAL.



SONNETS ON THE BUILDING

OF

S. NINIAN'S CATHEDRAL, PERTH,

WITH INTRODUCTORY VERSES,

BY

RIGHT REV. CHAS. WORDSWORTH, D.D., D.C.L.,

BISHOP OF S. ANDREWS, ETC.

Ad G. T. S. F.,

Ædis S. Niniani apud Pertham Præcentorem et Poetam.

SALVERE jubeo te, Poeta jam noster.
 O si quod olim in Conditore Thebano,
 Lapides canendo qui movere callebat,
 Accidere posset, te canente tam belle !
 Tum quam repente surgeret Cathedralis
 Perfecta moles ; tumque cordibus gratis
 Quot vota cœlo solverentur exsultim !
 Et qui Poeta es, Conditor fores noster.

EPISCOP. SANCT. ANDR.

Translation of the same.

To G. T. S. F.,

PRECENTOR AND POET OF S. NINIAN'S CATHEDRAL, PERTH.

ALL hail to thee, who art become our bard !

O ! that Amphion's wonder-working lyre,
 Which built the walls of Thebes, might be transferred

To thee, who sing'st so sweetly ! All entire
 How swiftly then would our Cathedral pile

Rise up ! How full would the exulting strain
 Of thanks to Heaven be raised ! And thou, meanwhile,
 "Building the lofty rhyme," would'st build our Fane !

BP. OF S. ANDREWS.

Perth Cathedral Sonnets, No. 1.

*ON THE PROSPECT OF SEEING THE CATHEDRAL
COMPLETED, 1886.*

THROUGH many tribulations must we go
Before to Heaven's high kingdom we attain:
Nor must our feet reluctantly disdain
To tread the footsteps of our Master's woe.
By this the patient Church was taught to grow:
Through many griefs her upward path hath lain:
Nor least in Scotia hath she suffered pain,
Deprest and to "a shadow's shade" brought low.
But see! God breaks her Scottish gloom at last:
At His command the long black night departs
And the blue day returns. Awhile remain
To us, dear life! for here approacheth fast
The gladness longed for by our prayerful hearts—
The hope to see S. Ninian's full-grown Fane!

Perth Cathedral Sonnets, No. 2.

PRAYER FOR THE CATHEDRAL IN 1887.

PREVENT us, Lord, with Thy continual aid
In whatsoe'er we do : but chiefly now
Advance the work, for which full many a vow
Ascends to Thee. May offerings still be made
For Thy dear sake, until, securely laid,
We see the last stone on the topmost row
Of these Cathedral walls, that all may know
A debt of love has here to Thee been paid.
And let not sin make void our future hours
With empty rites, but kindle brightly here
In many souls the Faith's authentic flame.
Add here one more to Zion's own true towers :
O'er this new Fane shed grace so rich and clear
That it may spread the glory of Thy Name !

Perth Cathedral Sonnets, No. 3.

BUILDING BEGUN, 1888.

IF 'tis enquired wherefore I tune my lyre
To these Cathedral songs, I proudly say
That, while I'm weaving thus my humble lay,
I see an end to which I would aspire.
For, though 'tis much that other men should tire
Body and mind throughout the livelong day ;
And, though 'tis much that they should give away
Their wealth to gain the end of our desire,
Yet is there left me one thing to fulfil,
One thing, which if it be beyond my skill,
Is yet a wise delight to have essayed :
I fain would leave a message to proclaim,
When we shall only be a by-gone name,
With what deep joy were these foundations laid !

Pertb Cathedral Sonnets, No. 4.

A REPLY TO SANBALLAT, GESHEM, AND TOBIAH.

THERE are who view our dear emprise with scorn,
And, never guessing at our inward glow
Of love, demand sagaciously to know
How we shall fill this Church each holy morn,
When 'tis complete. But I have still forborne
To answer questions, which are seen to grow
From hearts whose stream of sympathy runs low
And would not rise, though we were left forlorn.
Since, when this growing Pile stands forth at length
A perfect whole, I hope perhaps that less
Shall we *fill it* than it shall wondrously
Fill us with sense of soul-subduing strength ;
Fill us with sense of sacred loveliness ;
Fill us with sense of God's own Majesty !

Perth Cathedral Sonnets, No. 5.

ON SEEING THE MASONS AT WORK, 1888.

BESIDE the Minsters of the South, 'tis true,
As fits the Northern Church of our small isle,
A Church all strange to this world's friendly smile,
Thou wilt seem slight, when strangers come to view.
Nor will thy walls be rich with age's hue,
Nor kings bedeck thee with their gorgeous style,
Nor ancient memories hang round each aisle,
But thou wilt be unhistoried and new.
Yet, though in many a way thou'lt be surpassed,
Let all the coming generations know
That thou'rt the birth of fervent Christian prayer;
Thy goodly columns, tall as some ship's mast,¹
Are traced by Christian hands and, as they grow,
Our hearts rise with them through the upper air!

¹ The western arch is to be 40 feet high.

Perth Cathedral Sonnets, No. 6.

SUGGESTED BY THE VERY REV. THE PROVOST'S ILLNESS.

DELIGHTFUL task, indeed, to watch the hand
Of sturdy craftsman ply the skilful steel,
Compelling so the shapeless stones to feel
The pressure of his powerful blows, and stand
New-formed and comely as his purpose planned !
Delightful, too, as ever upwards steal
The rising walls, to note the builders seal
Each well-hewn block in its appointed band !
But ah ! the pain, when we ourselves are stones,
And the great Builder of the eternal Fane
Hews us and moulds us for its walls on high !
His loving strokes are answered by our groans,
Until at last, the soul's new form made plain,
We joy to own our heavenly destiny !

Perth Cathedral Sonnets, No. 7.

WHILE WATCHING THE MASONS AT WORK, 1889.

A STRONG desire still moves me to behold
The slowly growing fabric day by day :
I love to haunt the spot, and dreamingly
Descry the finished vision all unrolled
Before my wistful eyes. Then uncontrolled
My sanguine fancy ranges on its way,
And sees the Church successfully essay
To don the glory which was hers of old.
And yet do I desire this thing aright ?
Is there no mingling wish that I may then
Win reflex glory from the triumph gained ?
Put this thought from me, Lord, and by Thy might
Make love of Church one with the love of men,
And of Thine Image in their souls contained !

Perth Cathedral Sonnets, No. 8.

OUR POINT OF VIEW EXPLAINED TO POSTERITY. 1889.

REJOICED to see these holy walls arise,
In simple strains I sang my gratitude,
Proclaiming that, where once a circus stood,
This noble pile now points us to the skies.
Whereon methought, "Such words will breed surprise,
Perchance, in future minds to learn what food
For rapture lay in this Cathedral—good,
Yet oft surpassed, where happier England lies."
But, if the next age chance to marvel so,
I judge they have no bitter cause to know
How deep the Church can fall through adverse fate!
For, if they felt what crushed our fathers' heart,
They would not ask why, playing Jeshua's¹ part,
Our souls with humbler mercies grow elate!

¹ See Ezra iii. 2.

SONNETS FROM THE FRENCH.



Sonnets from the French, No. 1.

LOVE AND SONG.

THERE are such depths of time ! The centuries
Are long a-dying, till it often seems—
While multitudinous the throng that streams
Into the tomb—that some great Empire's days
Grow endless : yet it also treads the ways
Of mortal things at last. And nought redeems
Each several life, howe'er with joy it teems,
From vanishing amid th' eternities.
So, while this first, fresh pulse of mutual love—
Which shall endure though not unchanged remain—
Still makes my heart beat so deliciously
In wandering after thee, look ! now I prove
If even true-breathed song must strive in vain
To keep this month embalmed for thee and me !

Sonnets from the French, No. 2.

LOVE'S ENTRANCE.

I FANCIED that this Life was nothing more
Than dull and grey, with just a passing glance
Of pleasure-giving colour to enhance
The dimness of the robe it daily wore.
So, then, resignedly, but little store
Of hope I built on any future chance,
And with brave heart I said I must advance
Still learning year by year stern Duty's lore.
This wisdom let me keep—only, whereas
To yield the world was then slight sacrifice,
'Twere now an offering richer through my tears :
For since I heard thy voice, the Earth, which was
Like to a harp with silent harmonies,
Resounds enchanting music in mine ears !

Sonnets from the French, No. 3.

LOVE'S VICTORY.

THEREFORE I fear surrender, lest my love
Should break all bounds and quench the reasoning mind,
And lest I, turned thereby apostate, find
Thee idolised upon God's Throne above !
And yet what saith S. John ? " For this there move
All fondnesses within the breast, and bind
Us each to each, that they may be refined
And give us power God's tenderness to prove."
Yea, " if our brethren please us not, then how
Can Christ be dear ? " And, if we do not know
True marriage love, how can we learn to be
The heavenly Bridegroom's bride ? So, therefore, now
Trusting in love, where'er it bid me go,
I yield my soul from henceforth unto thee !

Sonnets from the French, No. 4.

"LOVE'S PATHOS."

AROUND, there lies th' unfathomed Universe :
And, threatening closest, the impatient sea
Of men, which, rolling on like Destiny,
O'erwhelms the weak and failing with its curse.
And there is Space, where unreach'd stars disperse
A waning light, which our eyes never see :
And Time, which has been one Eternity
And shall another be. And next, far worse,
Comes ruthless Death, who spares no one at all,
But from familiar Earth drives us at last
Forth into where no human bonds can reach.
And in the midst, ere yet God's sentence fall,
Before the words : "No more," His lips have passed,
Your heart and mine are beating each on each !

Sonnets from the French, No. 5.

"LOVE'S CROWN."

FRIENDS ask to-day wherefore I no more sing,
Nor for so long have sought to ease my heart,
Who strove erewhile to win by homely art
Those sweet reliefs harmonious numbers bring.
And 'twere enough to answer : "When the wing
Of thought is folded, how can one impart
To speech the needful, lofty sweep, or dart
To regions where the voice inspired will ring?"
But lo ! to thee the dearer cause I'll tell
Why now no more old longings in me swell,
Nor wistful strivings force me into song.
For, since we left the Altar, every hour
Shews plainer that thy wedded love has power
To soothe the yearnings, which were once so strong



MUSICAL SONNETS.



Musical Sonnets, No. 1.

MUSIC AND I.

MOST like, when I must leave my home, this earth,
I'll fall from out men's thoughts, as does a stone
From out their sight when in the sea 'tis thrown ;
Or vanish like the smoke upon the hearth.
But, if unlikely chance should yet give birth
To future memories of my life, alone
I will not have them name me : let them own
Along with me mysterious Music's worth.
For we have lived so fondly, she and I,
So sweet her voice to me, I scarce can think
She'll charm another thus when I'm no more.
Ah, one Adagio !¹ No need to try
And come more close upon the shining brink
Of Paradise, till God those bowers restore !

¹ *i.e.* that of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 22.

Musical Sonnets, No. 2.

MUSICAL SIGHT.

LOOK from this window : that which meets the eyes,
That City there, is Perth : in front the Tay
Glides through yon bridge upon its seaward way :
Beyond, in the far distance, mountains rise.

But now return and play those symphonies

I love so dearly, for, whene'er you play,

I seem to see the sunlight of a day

Whose pure, unearthly brightness never dies.

Yea, while I listen, viewing that fair scene,

I there discern what was quite hid before,

For lo ! the hills, the town upon the shore,

And that swift-flowing river, all have been

Transformed, and o'er them flit such radiant gleams

As surely danced on Eden's fourfold streams !

Musical Sonnets, No. 3.

*ON FIRST HEARING MUSIC BY CLEMENTI.*¹

CLEMENTI! I had never heard thy name
Spoken as one of those whose works would live
To gladden and to raise men's hearts and give
Thee lasting place within the book of Fame!
But when from Haydn's brightest fancy came
More charming strains? Did e'en Mozart e'er strive,
Great Master, more triumphantly to drive
The Muse to yield her richness to his claim?
Nay, thou, too, in the realm of harmonies
Dost rule a king: in truth they had but dreamed,
That said mechanic rules were all thy store.
O! never heard I sweeter sounds than these!
While I sat listening in delight, it seemed
As if I could not be unhappy more.

¹ Sonata Op : 34, No. 1.

Musical Sonnets, No. 4.

MENDELSSOHN.

ONCE, while the sun shone bright at summer's call
Over the ripening harvest fields, and made
New gladness in the woodland dells, I stayed,
A prisoner on my bed, apart from all.
Outside I watched a rose-tree on the wall
That ever by a gentle breeze was swayed,
For now the crimson 'neath the green was laid,
And now again the flower would foremost fall.
And I was somewhat sad, when on mine ear
There fell an air I loved of Mendelssohn,
The sweet, wild singing of one hid from sight.
What was it? Did there come a spirit near?
Something there was that moved me in that tone,
And filled the things I looked on with strange light!

Musical Sonnets, No. 5.

MDME. N. NERUDA¹ AT A VIOLIN RECITAL.

'TIS common sense that men most widely prize ;
To hold the main chance fast is their loved aim ;
Who keeps his wits alert, they count him wise ;
Who watches not his time secures their blame.
And what am I, since so they fill my life
With all convenient comforts, to refuse
Due thanks to them who boldly face this strife,
This dreary business strife of gain or lose ?
Yet is Neruda nearer to my heart,
For, ere her bow hath touched the opening string,
And charmed us with the wonder of her art,
She has made known to me a welcome thing—
Revealed this secret by that dreamy eye,
That her soul haunts a vision world on high !

¹ Now Lady Hallé.



ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS.



Ecclesiastical Sonnets, No. 1.

HIGH CHURCH.

WHEN I essayed the Low Church gospel plan,
I found no quiet for my anxious heart :
For, though they claimed the saving, heavenly art,
Their wordy converse savoured but of man.
And when I next to Broad professors ran,
Led by their specious promise at the start,
Erelong I sorrowed to have ta'en their part,
And sighed beneath a homeless wanderer's ban.
But, when amid the Catholic throng I kneel,—
As they rejoice, whose cheeks with tears were wet,
What time one lost is welcomed back by them,
So pulses of a richer life I feel ;
Before me now the light of Heaven is set,
And, through the grave, the new Jerusalem !

Ecclesiastical Sonnets, No. 2.

RITUALISM.

To me, a child, my mother used to say,
What time we paused before the ruined wall
Of some dismantled Church, "See! this we call
The glorious work of the Reformers' day."
Whereon my thoughts would wander far away;
"Ah, yes!" I'd sigh, "we know of Adam's fall
From Paradise, and I suppose we all
From these Cathedrals went once more astray."
And, as I could not doubt the primal sin,
So did I acquiesce in this new loss
Of the old Christian ritual's mystic powers.
But a dear hope has lately entered in—
To Eden's new-born bliss we cannot cross,
But may that worship not again be ours?

Ecclesiastical Sonnets, No. 3.

ALTAR LIGHTS.

OUTSIDE upon the City's crowded streets,
And far beyond, o'er woods and meadows gay,
The sun, still climbing on his upward way,
The face of Nature with fresh brightness greets.
Why, then, is he who to this House retreats,
To worship Him who made the gladsome day,
Confronted by yon Altar tapers' ray,
Which powerlessly the glorious radiance meets?
'Tis burning there to teach us that the light,
That falls upon our eyes' material sight,
Can never guide us to the world of Grace:
And as memorial of that other Sun,
Who from the highest Heavens His course hath run,
And in the Church assumes His mystic place.

Ecclesiastical Sonnets, No. 4.

IN THE PULPIT.

THEY do not love the steep and upward road
Of Reason, but the easy talker's flow:
And, therefore, I their sluggish minds must goad,
Till, urged by Wisdom's thirst, they long to *know*.
They do not love th' austere simplicity
Of those, to whom the world's a passing scene:
And, therefore, must I cause my speech to be
Like his, who learns his heart from earth to wean.
They do not love to hear of mystic power
Conferred on few men for the many's sake:
And, therefore, I must oft recall that hour,¹
When o'er the Church elect Christ's Spirit brake.
O, Lord! Thou bidst me play a lonely part,
Grant perseverance to my shrinking heart!

¹ See Acts ii.

Ecclesiastical Sonnets, No. 5.

A COACH DRIVE THROUGH GLENCOE.

How diversely thy' wilds affected each,
Glencoe!—she, sitting farthest from my right,
Rejoiced not, as we drove, at any sight,
For freckling sunshine her fair cheeks would reach.
And one behind thus freed his soul in speech,
“A famous place for whisky stills!” “In fight,”
Another said, “Macdonald 'neath yon height
Slew all the Campbells venturing near his reach.”
But, when I stood where fell Macdonald's clan
So foully slain, regret through my heart ran,
For force, I saw, was William's boasted strength :
And, ah ! his spirit from that fatal hour,
Regarding but success of earthly power,
Long vexed the Church through Scotland's breadth and
length

Ecclesiastical Sonnets, No. 6.

*SUGGESTED BY THE ESTABLISHED AND FREE
ASSEMBLIES. 1889.*

THOUGH I ne'er owned the Presbyterian's creed,
I grant it was belief downright and strong,
To which the hearts of Scotchmen did belong
And find an answer in it to their need.
But, now, behold them eager to be freed
From its demands! See, thinking it a wrong
To sign their fathers' words, in num'rous throng
Revision of their Faith they have decreed!
Unmoved I cannot stand and watch the frame
Of homely thought, that stood so long the same,
Dissolve and leave a void on every hand.
Hope does not leave me, but there comes a dread
Lest, that long-praised "Confession" having fled,
A race of doubters should perplex the land!

Ecclesiastical Sonnets, No. 7.

*ON THE CONSTANT APPOINTMENT OF STRANGERS TO
IMPORTANT SCOTCH LIVINGS.*

WHEREFORE is this, my countrymen, that each,
High, vacant cure of souls in all our land,
In falling from a native pastor's hand,
Is filled by those, who o'er the Border reach?
Wherefore is this, that, when we wish to preach
Against the modern, innovating band
And in the ancient paths to take our stand,
We talk to Scotland in a foreign speech?
Ah! give us homely voices with their skill
To fire the silent, fervid, northern heart,
Restoring thus the Church's rule at length!
Yet faint not, brothers, for God works His Will,
Not by astuteness of poor, human art,
But by our weakness loves to shew His strength!



SONNETS OF NATURE.



Sonnets of Nature, No. 1.

BLINDNESS AND VISION.

SAY whence is this, that no new quickening thought
Has stirred for months the deadness of my brain
To inspiration, but along the plain,
Dull road of commonplace my mind has wrought?
Why now does Nature shew herself as nought,
And darling Music play to me in vain?
Why comes there now from Life nor joy nor pain?
Ah, why have I in vain their secrets sought?
Nay rather, whence is this that, by no will
Of mine at all, sometimes a common thing
Transforms itself before me, though I miss
The point of change, and, while I watch in still
And silent expectation wondering,
Puts on a glory—tell me, whence is this?

Sonnets of Nature, No. 2.

A MESSAGE FROM THE OCEAN.

I STOOD upon a Scottish mountain top
To-day: far off upon th' horizon's bound
Ocean appeared, seen dim from one high mound,
Where lonely Nature spread her stunted crop
Of bush and grass. Awhile I chose to stop,
When, lo! a sea-gull winged its way and found
That inland spot: I saw it view the ground,
And to the earth with the waves' message drop.
Then low I spake:—"E'en so it is with me;
I, too, am girdled by the boundless main
Of God's infinity: to me has come
A message from my strange encircling sea
At times and stirred the pulses of my brain:
Then, though I feel, words fail and I am dumb!"

Sonnets of Nature, No. 3.

LOTUS-EATING.

SOME men are born for striving not for rest :
Their only joy is, when, amid the play
And stress of human action in their way,
They seize with forceful wills what they love best.
Not such am I, for it must be confessed,
Though Conscience makes me toll to Labour pay,
That vague forebodings of the final day
About to dawn unnerve my human breast.
So here I lie full-stretched as one, who flees
The cares that perish : and my heart finds home,
For, while there breathe these whisperings from the trees,
And June's sun warms the winds that past me roam,
Lo ! I discern what he, who toils, ne'er sees—
Elysian visions through my closed eyes come !

Sonnets of Nature, No. 4.

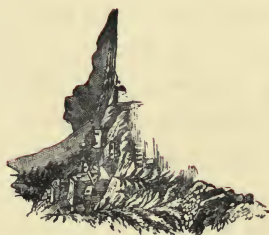
AUTUMN.

LO! Autumn once again! The verdant leaves
Wax golden now : the robins have begun
To whistle their sweet song, and the dry sheaves
Are carried home beneath a waning sun.
Angels, indeed, unvexed by mortal woes,
Not burdened by our father's primal doom,
Natures, in whom Life's quickening current flows,
May love the Spring with its vivacious bloom;
But we, not wholly from th' old Adam passed,
Our freshness through his error marred and gone,
Place thee, pale Autumn, in our love not last,
Who comest bringing fruits of labour won.
That saffron sky behind yon purple hill
Seems like a sphere of peaceful rest from ill!

Sonnets of Nature, No. 5.

IN THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE AT FRÉJUS.

THE days of Latium's power are passed away,
And regions where Barbarians had their home,
The subjects of the mighty mistress, Rome,
Now rule the world succeeding to her sway.
But still in fancy in that far-off day
We join that vanished People : now we come
To hear great Cicero speak resistance dumb,
Now follow Horace down the "Sacred Way."
And can it be these are the very walls
They built? Are these the tiers, whereon their bands
Would sit beholding in the years long fled?
Where are they now, whose silent voice still calls
Across the ages in their ancient lands?
Hark! God replies, "They live whom men call dead."



EPISTOLARY SONNETS.



Epistolary Sonnets, No. 1.

TO THE BISHOP OF S. ANDREWS,
*On receiving a Volume of his Latin Versions from the
"Christian Year."*

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER, in the times of yore
Men laboured for what philosophic charm
Would turn all things to gold. And so did harm
To their own higher selves, thus to explore
For earthly wealth and scorn the deeper lore,
The mystic power, which nerves the Church's arm
To spoil the world and, to her foes' alarm,
Transform its treasures for her wondrous store.
But thou hast ta'en the heathen verse of old,
And by thy potent spell hast driven away
The pagan from it, so that here to-day
All changed I find it into Christian gold!
Horace I may forget, but these your lays
Will often lead my thoughts in heavenly ways!

Epistolary Sonnets, No. 2.

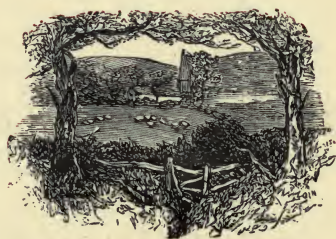
*TO HIS FAMILY ON THE DEATH OF THE VERY REV.
PROVOST BURTON.*

WHILE we are fresh upon our destined way,
We note the things about us and suppose
That they will be our world until the close,
Still growing dearer to us day by day.
But life's not so : it will not always stay
As it began, for quite away it throws
Its sweet, familiar moods and coldly shews
Its face all strange before us, suddenly.
Ah, then ! what chill creeps o'er our wounded heart !
We weep to feel how we are left alone
And treasures gone, which never can return !
But, Lord, this change Thou makest is the art,
By which Thoud'st teach our love to be full-grown ;
At first for Earth and then for Heaven to burn !

Epistolary Sonnets, No. 3.

*ON BEING ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE TO A LITERARY
SOCIETY.*

YOU ask me, Lady, "to supply a tale,
Or verse, or simple essay of my own
Once every month, which must be plainly shewn
To stand your critic's censure without fail."
This fond request might easily prevail,
For sweet I surely deem it to have thrown
Ignoble cares away and only known
How other joys before the Muses pale.
But, ah! Parnassus' dear companionship
Is not for me: far humbler is my fate;
Parochial details all my mind must fill.
And yet, I trust, if so there past me slip
Earth's lofty joys, then surely soon or late
I'll learn that meekness is exalted still!



SONNETS OF THE INNER LIFE.



Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 1.

THE GREAT REBELLION.

THE Greeks of yore told how a monstrous race,
The earth-born Titans, 'gainst high Zeus rebelled,
And, with such lawlessness their fury swelled,
They rolled the very mountains from their place
And piled them up, that they might reach the face
Of Him, whom impiously they would have quelled :
But He their hosts with His dread thunder felled
And dashed them down to Tartarus' utmost base.
Still in our days this wild revolt is waged :
Yet are there souls intoxicate with pride,
Who will not bow themselves beneath God's yoke.
But, while they madly war, with Thee enraged,
Lord, overwhelm them with Thine overpowering tide ;
Let Love defeat them with His magic stroke !

Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 2.

"EXPERIENTIA DOCET."

FIRST came the years of childhood, when my soul,
And not my body only, from the care
Of others drew support and learnt to wear
As its own dress what they'd for me unroll.
But, when my manhood opened, then this whole
Dependence vanished and (as one must dare
The billows of the Ocean, if they tear
His bark asunder), I must now control
The restless waves of doubt. And, oh! the pain,
When first I sank beneath the flood and thought
My spirit was engulfed! But now I see
That God knew well the forceful plunge would train
My opening mind to grasp, what first was taught,
No longer as a child but manfully!

Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 3.

LIFE'S LESSON.

WHY do we fix our hearts upon what dies,
Upon a world we know must pass away?
Why let it bind us closer every day,
While deep within our inmost being lies
A void, which nothing mortal satisfies,
But only Love that with us firm will stay
Whether in joy or in adversity,
And which outlasts the firmest human ties?
Then pass we by all earthly wealth and strength,
(Not as men scorning the good gifts of God,
But lest our hearts should cleave to things below,)
Till Life's great lesson we have learnt at length,
To welcome e'en the chastening of His rod
And in His Love our longed-for rest to know!

Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 4.

IN A MOMENT OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

'TIS not because, as an invited guest
At social festival, I fail to shine
In brilliant converse: nor because I rest
Ungraced by any public honour's sign:—
But 'tis because the patient toil of years,
That scorned to lean on self-advertisement,
And valued less the manner that appears,
Than inward worth, receives discouragement:—
'Tis this that makes me sadly to exclaim,
“Is, therefore, honest labour all for nought,
And Modesty indeed a worthless name?
And must success by coarse display be bought?”
O, Christ! preserve simplicity in me,
The single eye that looketh unto Thee!

Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 5.

"BLESSED ARE THE MEEK."

TIS not the men who masterful repose
Upon th' unyielding boldness of their wills
And ruthless clear away whatever fills
The space they wish, to whom my love o'erflows.
Rather my heart with gratitude then glows
When Jolly's¹ story meek my spirit stills ;
When Williams² sings amid Menevia's hills,
And Keble chants the gentle lays he knows.
'Tis true that from the first it is not right
To keep back thanks, since oftentimes they fight
The world with its own weapons to my gain,
But, lowly souls, ye bring a dearer gift ;
At your soft touch earth's cloudy vapours lift
And from above, lo ! Zion's splendours rain !

¹ Bishop of Moray, 1798-1838.

² Isaac Williams, author of "The Cathedral" and other poems.

Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 6.

ON READING THE "CONFESSIONS" OF S. AUGUSTINE.

THERE are dull, groping minds of men still pleased
To rest in empty nothings of the earth,
Vain, useless shows, scarce fit to stir the mirth
Of schoolboys from their books awhile released.
Yea, sadder still, souls are there so diseased
As draw delight from viewing some strange birth
Of Sin and find those courses nothing worth,
By which pure hearts most gratefully are eased.
But, as an eagle rises through the upper air,
The Saint, escaping these gross things beneath,
Soars up on sun-bathed pinions to the skies.
That I may follow him I breathe a prayer !
O ! might I only die his righteous death !
And if my latter end might be like his !

Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 7.

"IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT."

JUDGE not, ye cowl'd monks, who have forsworn
To share again in pleasant, worldly ways :
Judge not, ye men of fashion, all whose days
Along enjoyment's stream are gaily borne :
Let these not mock, nor those begin to mourn
If one, who in God's temple duly prays,
'Mid sports and merry laughter often stays
And to be lightsome shews no sign of scorn.
Judge not ! for how can ye, from whom his heart
Is hid, presume to know at all what there
He meditates ? What if, for Christ's own sake
He's playing thus the self-denier's part,
Desiring rather (though he quells the prayer),
'Mid contemplation's bowers his rest to take ?

Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 8.

MY AMBITION.

WHEN I have tried from wasteful sloth to rise,
Afraid lest all my life should pass for nought,
And when to do some fruitful act I've sought,
The World has spread her charms before mine eyes :
And " Lo ! walk in th' aspiring steps," she cries,
" Of those who, by my long experience taught,
Resounding glory to themselves have bought
And found my favour their sufficient prize ! "
But, when I hear these promises of Earth,
I doubt the source whence they derive their worth,
And thus, with other hopes inspired, I pray :—
" Lord, take some little word or deed of mine
And through it cause Thy radiant beams to shine,
To aid a brother on his heavenward way ! "

Sonnets of the Inner Life, No. 9.

ON ENTERING MY THIRTY-THIRD YEAR.

WHEN I consider how the fleeting years
Have borne me onwards to the middle stage
Of human life, till mine is now the age
When, if at all, the World our voices hears,
A longing well-nigh forces me to tears,
That I may write my name upon some page,
Which shall the thoughts of future men engage
What time my form no more on earth appears.
Then comes a new desire, "Let them forget,"
I cry, "that I have ever been, and let
My days be henceforth hidden and obscure,
If only, when my spirit flits away,
The waiting souls in Paradise may say,
'Here thou hast won a fame both fair and sure



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